

case study

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Nortel Networks: Assesses Customer Needs Quickly and Accurately with MapInfo

MapInfo Corporation

One Global View
 Troy, New York
 12180-8399

518.285.6000 TEL
 518.285.6070 FAX

Nortel Networks specialist Network Systems & Solutions Group is not only helping the company win business throughout Asia Pacific, it is delivering real benefits to customers using MapInfo's suite of products.

Nortel's Network Systems & Solutions Group's small 12-member team based in Australia, Singapore and China, uses MapInfo tools to support Nortel's new business bid responses throughout Asia and assist telecommunications carriers, alternate operators and service providers with strategic network planning, detailed network planning and implementation.

MapInfo's products help Nortel's Asia Pacific operation understand market segmentation, assess demand for communication services and identify the most suitable end-to-end solution for any given customer distribution—be it in a central business district, suburban or rural area.



“BY ADDING A NEW DIMENSION WITH ACTUAL MAPS, YOU GREATLY BOOST THE LEVEL OF POWER FOR DOING ADVANCED ANALYSIS. YOU CAN'T TELL BY LOOKING AT A SPREADSHEET WHAT LOCATION WOULD BE BEST FOR A CERTAIN SERVICE, BUT YOU CAN REALLY IDENTIFY THINGS ON A MAP.”

While MapInfo Professional® is the main application used, Nortel also utilizes MapInfo products MapInfo® MapBasic® and GeoLoc (MapInfo Australia's geocoding software); MapInfo partner products including ExaMin's MapLinker and Northwood Geoscience's Vertical Mapper; and supporting market data such as census products including Australian Bureau of Statistics CData96 Australia and MapData Sciences CData96 New Zealand.

MapInfo's products are used for numerous applications, including demographic analysis, market segmentation, coverage definition identifying and assessing service demand, business planning, target marketing, competitive analysis, traffic engineering, network optimization and roll out scenarios.

“MapInfo and other GIS tools and data help us to build customer relationships and to understand the customers' requirements better, because we are actually seeing the world through their eyes,” said Katina Michael, network and systems planner for Nortel's Network & Systems Solutions Group. “We can respond better to their needs and help them to make better business decisions.

“It (MapInfo's solution) gives us the capability to do very powerful analysis by introducing a third dimension to our work,” she said. “It goes beyond numbers on a spreadsheet or static information in a database. By adding a new dimension with actual maps, you greatly boost the level of power for doing advanced analysis. You can't tell by looking at a spreadsheet what location would be best for a certain service, but you can really identify things on a map.”

CUSTOMER

Nortel Networks

NEEDS

- ▶ A powerful analysis tool that quickly and accurately supports businesses throughout Asia

PROBLEM

- ▶ Accuracy lacking with examinations of numbers just on a spreadsheet or static information
- ▶ Turnaround speed needed to be upgraded to “Internet speed”

SOLUTION

MapInfo products delivered via MapInfo® MapXtreme® are used in demographic analysis, market segmentation, business planning, target marketing, competitive analysis, traffic engineering, network optimization and network roll out

BENEFITS

- ▶ Adds mapping dimension for powerful and advanced analyses
- ▶ Enhanced customer service with thorough market analysis

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According to Michael, it was previously impossible to visualize an entire network, for example. “Now we have the ability to look at that on a map and compare a centralized network architecture to a decentralized network architecture—and that helps us make a better assessment. It gives you key information like distance and surface area that a spreadsheet or database can’t show you, and that provides greater accuracy. Before it was a guesstimate but now our network responses are very precise.”

Nortel’s customers benefit, because the MapInfo tools give them the ability to carry out thorough market analysis, Michael explained.

“We can take a top-down approach, looking at what they should be doing to maximize their business opportunities,” she said. “We can look at a map of Australia and do a national, very high-level market analysis or go down to suburb or street level—or even a floor within a building.”

Michael points to one of Australia’s largest service providers to demonstrate how the group benefits customers. Following a Nortel study using MapInfo Professional and GeoLoc, the company changed its proposed fiber route for a metropolitan area.

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“We looked at businesses in the proposed coverage area by type and size,” Michael explained. “We told them they could change their proposed route to optimize it and pick up more customers. We believe we helped them boost their revenue base via the optimized route by looking at the factual information.”

The Network Systems & Solutions Group selected MapInfo for its flexibility, portability and automation features.

“The planners in the group do consulting work throughout the Asian region, and they need the flexibility to use it on their desktop wherever they are—on-site with the customer or overseas,” she said. “The MapInfo tools also have a lot of support from data suppliers, which was crucial. If the currency of your data does not match your state-of-the-art modeling capabilities, you’re letting yourself and your customers down. It’s also very easy to build applications, add on tools and automate manual tasks in MapInfo Professional.”

With the team’s input required for up to 100 bid responses and consultations a year, speed of turnaround is also critical, she added. “Before, projects might have lasted one to two months each, but now we have to respond within weeks or even days. The clock is always ticking. You don’t have time to scream for numbers, you need to be able to act quickly.

“When you are working at Web-speed,” she continued, “you can’t dispatch people to all these different locations throughout Asia, but now everything that you could do if you were physically there, you can do remotely using MapInfo tools and data. Before these GIS tools were available, people were using things like overhead transparencies on their monitors to trace maps. You would end up with the wrong scale simply because people had different screen sizes. Others used shoelaces to measure distances, which gave a very crude estimate. We have come a long way in a short time and the team has integrated the GIS applications into their daily work.”

Nortel’s Network Systems & Solutions Group eventually aims to make the information it has collected available throughout the company using MapInfo® MapXtreme®, the MapInfo application built specifically for mapping on the Web.

“Over the years, we have been building a lot of telecommunications-specific layers, and, while our group is quite small, we interact with a lot of other groups from many other departments,” Michael noted. “We plan to use MapXtreme to support information sharing throughout Nortel Networks. It will allow everyone to share in the layers we have built and get greater value out of the large database of Asian/Australasian information we have collected.” ●

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